eligible youths opting for a career in the Army has increased. On this consideration, the campaign is continuing.

Apart from the above, the Government have approved, in principle, short term, medium and long term measures to tide over the problem of shortage in Army. This includes reduction in training period of officers by six months at Indian Military Academy (IMA) for ex-NDA, Ex-ACC and Direct Entry cadets for a period of two years from January, 2000 to December, 2001 besides constitution of a high level committee to recommend feasible options to make Short Services Commission more attractive.

Lowering of the Cost of Mirage by France

1889. SHRI K. M. SAIFULLAH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether France proposes to lower the cost of Mirage to be sold to India by labour sharing arrangement with India;

(b) if so, the terms and conditions of the sale; and

(c) by when the supply is expected?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) The current negotiations for procurement of 10 additional Mirage 2000 aircraft have not yet been finalised.

Under Utilisation of funds by Army

1890. SHRI K. M. SAIFULLAH:
SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH:
DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR:
SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO:
DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether over Rs. 800 crores of the Army's Budget for 1999-2000 remained unspent;

(b) if so, the reasons for not utilising the money for modernising the equipments needed by the Army; and

(c) the action proposed to tone up the defence planning which have never run to schedule?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) The Accounts for the year 1999-2000 have not yet been closed and are due later during August, 2000. As such the final short-fall in expenditure is not known at this stage. However, as per the available information on progress of expenditure, the shortfall is not expected to be anywhere near Rs. 800 crores.

(c) The current Defence Plan was finalised in the first year of the Plan period.

SU-30 Deal with Russia

1891. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA:
SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Comptroller and Auditor General pulled up Government on its failure to ensure implementation of Rs. 6310 crores deal for the SU-30, signed with Russia in 1996;

(b) whether it is also a fact that there have been no more deliveries after May, 1997 despite an investment of Rs. 2482 crores so far and there has been a delay of 24 months in the programme; and

(c) if so, what are Government's views in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) The Comptroller and Auditor General has pointed out delays in program implementation.

(b) 8 aircrafts were delivered in 1997. However under a separate contract signed in 1998, 10 more aircrafts were delivered during 1999, bringing the total aircrafts delivered till date to 18.